

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 were previously pending in this application. By this amendment, Applicant is amending claims 1 and 7. As a result claims 1-9 are pending for examination with claims 1 and 7 being independent claims. No new matter has been added.

Summary of Telephone Interview with Examiner

On January 14, 2009, the undersigned telephoned Examiner Tiv to request a telephone interview to discuss the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. On January 15, 2009 and per Examiner Tiv's request, the undersigned faxed the Examiner a proposed agenda for the telephone interview that included proposed amendments to the claims. On January 23, 2009, the undersigned participated in a telephone interview with Examiner Tiv and his supervisor John Follansbee to discuss the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as well as the rejections of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

During the interview, the undersigned explained the two different proposed alternative versions of claim 1 to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, with the Examiners indicating a preference for the language of claim 1 as presented herein. The undersigned also explained Applicant's invention and why claim 1, as presented herein, patentably distinguished over the asserted combination of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0169886 to Saito et al. (hereinafter Saito) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5, 666,363 to Osakabe et al. (hereinafter Osakabe) and U.S. Patent No. 7,143,187 to Takeda et al (hereinafter Takeda). Although no agreement was reached with respect to the patentability of the claims, the Examiners did agree that the proposed amendments to claim 1 presented herein overcame the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and that as a courtesy to the Applicant, they would contact the undersigned prior to sending out a new office action again rejecting the claims.

Summary of Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to overcome the rejection of under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph by making it clear that only one device of the plurality of devices has a particular address associated with the transmission indicator, and that all other devices that have the particular address will have the particular address associated with the reception indicator.

Claim 1 has also been amended to further clarify Applicant's claimed invention, and to thereby further patentably distinguish over the asserted combination of Saito, Osakabe, and Takeda. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to clarify the manner in which the operation of a device varies dependent upon whether the address that is received by the device is associated with the transmission indicator or the reception indicator. This aspect of Applicant's invention is described, for example, in Applicant's specification at page 8, line 30 through page 9, line 13, and is not taught by any of Saito, Osakabe or Takeda, alone, or in combination. As now recited in claim 1, in response to the communication circuit of a device receiving an address that is associated with the transmission indicator, that single device will transmit the information frame contained in the memory associated with that address over the network and provide its processor unit with an identifier of that address. All other devices that receive that address and which associate that address with the reception indicator await transmission of the information frame by the single device, and write the information frame transmitted over the network by the single device into the memory associated with that address and provide its processing unit with an identifier of that address. As now presented, claim 1 is identical to claim 1 (First Alternative) faxed to the Examiners on January 15, 2009.

Claim 7 as now presented is similar, but not identical to that presented to the Examiners on January 15, 2009. In this regard, claim 7 replaces the expression "capable of" with "configured to." Claim 7 has further been amended in a manner consistent with claim 1 to more clearly and patentably distinguish over the asserted combination of Saito, Osakabe, and the Wikipedia citation. Specifically, claim 7 now recites that the communication circuit writes "a next information frame" received from the network to the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a second determined type, and transmits to said processing unit an identifier of the register associated with said address.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

As noted above, claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As indicated above, claim 1 has been amended to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito in view of Osakabe and Takeda, and rejected claims 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito in view of Osakabe and in view of “Memory data register”/Memory address register by Wikipedia.

As noted above, each of claims 1 and 7 has been amended to further patentably distinguish over the asserted combinations of Saito, Osakabe, Takeda, and Wikipedia.

1. Claims 1-6 Patentably Distinguish over Saito, Osakabe, and Takeda

Claim 1 is directed to a method for exchanging information frames over a network between a plurality of devices. Each device of the plurality of devices comprises a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and also comprises a plurality of addresses. Each address is associated with one of a transmission indicator and a reception indicator, but not both. Each address is associated with a memory containing an information frame that can be at least one of modified and read by the processing unit. Only a single device of the plurality of devices includes one of the plurality of addresses that is associated with the transmission indicator, and all other devices of the plurality of devices that include the one address associate the one address with the reception indicator. The method comprises the steps of having a master device periodically transmit an address of the plurality of addresses over the network, and responsive to transmission of the address by the master device, having the communication circuit of the single device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the transmission indicator transmit the information frame contained in the memory associated with the address over the network and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address, and having the communication circuit of each device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the reception indicator write into the memory associated with the address the information frame transmitted over the network by the single device and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address.

Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the asserted combination of Saito, Osakabe, and Takeda because these references, alone and in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest all the limitations of independent claim 1. Specifically, the asserted combination of Saito, Osakabe, and Takeda fails to disclose, teach, or suggest that each address is associated with one of a

transmission indicator and a reception indicator, but not both, and that only a single device of the plurality of devices includes one of the plurality of addresses that is associated with the transmission indicator, and all other devices of the plurality of devices that include the one address associate the one address with the reception indicator as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the asserted combination of Saito, Osakabe, and Takeda for at least this reason.

Claim 1 further recites the manner in which the operation of a device in accordance with the present invention varies dependent upon whether the address that is received by the device is associated with the transmission indicator or the reception indicator. Specifically, claim 1 now recites that responsive to transmission of the address by the master device: the communication circuit of the single device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the transmission indicator transmits the information frame contained in the memory associated with the address over the network and provides its processing unit with an identifier of the address; and the communication circuit of each device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the reception indicator writes into the memory associated with the address the information frame transmitted over the network by the single device and provides its processing unit with an identifier of the address. Simply put, this further aspect of Applicant's claimed invention is not disclosed in any of Saito, Osakabe, or Takeda, or any reasonable combination thereof. Accordingly, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the asserted combination of Saito in view of Osakabe and Takeda, and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious thereover is respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 2-6 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 and are patentable over Saito in view of Osakabe and Takeda for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1. Accordingly withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 2-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Saito in view of Osakabe and Takeda is respectfully requested.

2. Claims 7-9 Patentably Distinguish over Saito, Osakabe, and Takeda

Claim 7 is directed to a device that can be connected to a network. The device comprises a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and including an address table, a register table, and a direction table. Each register in the register table is associated with an address in the address table. The direction table comprises one direction indicator per address. The processing

unit is configured to read information frames stored in the registers and write information frames to the registers. The communication circuit is configured to, upon reception of a request received from the network and corresponding to one of said addresses, transmit over the network the information frame stored in the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a first determined type, write a next information frame received from the network to the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a second determined type, and transmit to said processing unit an identifier of the register associated with said address.

Claim 7 patentably distinguishes over the asserted combination of Saito in view of Osakabe and Wikipedia for many of the same reasons as claim 1. Specifically, none of these references, nor the asserted combination thereof discloses, teaches, or suggests a device that includes a communication circuit that is configured to, upon reception of a request received from the network and corresponding to one of said addresses, transmit over the network the information frame stored in the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a first determined type, write a next information frame received from the network to the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a second determined type, and transmit to said processing unit an identifier of the register associated with said address. Accordingly, claim 7 clearly and patentably distinguishes over the asserted combination of Saito in view of Osakabe and Wikipedia, and Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of claim 7 based thereon be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 8 and 9 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 7 and patentably distinguish over Saito in view of Osakabe for at least the same reasons as independent claim 7. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Saito in view of Osakabe is respectfully requested.

3. The Asserted Combination of Saito and Osakabe

During the telephone interview, the undersigned discussed some of the reasons why he believed the asserted combination of Saito and Osakabe to be improper, and why that combination did not teach Applicants claimed invention. For example, with respect to the asserted combination of Saito and Osakabe, the undersigned questioned why one of ordinary

skill in the art would be motivated to combine a reference directed to the mapping of an emerging standard facility related network protocol (such as Echonet) onto existing, general purpose, standardized radio frequency **network** protocols (such as Bluetooth and IP), with yet a different standardized optical **bus** protocol (such as D2B) specifically designed for a particular class of devices (such as audio/video equipment), or why one would modify the address and data fields of those standardized protocols a way that would be incompatible with the industry standard. However, in the interests of brevity, and because the undersigned believes that claims, as now presented, clearly and patentably distinguish over the asserted combination of references, Applicant does not traverse the asserted combination of references herein, but reserves the right to traverse those combinations in a future response, if necessary.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration is respectfully requested. This application should now be in condition for allowance; a notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check or authorization to charge a deposit account submitted herewith, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50/2762.

Respectfully submitted,
Marc Gandar, Applicant

By: Robert A. Skrivanek, Jr.
Robert A. Skrivanek, Jr. Reg. No. 41,316
LOWRIE, LANDO & ANASTASI, LLP
One Main Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142
United States of America
Telephone: 617-395-7000
Facsimile: 617-395-7070

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